

## The Last Survivor?: Crompton's Spurious Medals

**by Douglas J. Austin and Tom Muir      22      [ TWC 27(3) p29 2009 ]**

After our Editor's comment in this journal (Vol. 25 (2), 2007, p. 32), we note that Rookes Evelyn Bell Crompton (11 May 1845 - 15 February, 1940) - starting young - became an outstanding engineer.<sup>1</sup> During his holidays from Harrow (1856-58), he built a full-size steam-driven road engine in a home workshop. As an ensign in the Rifle Brigade<sup>2</sup>, he served for four years in India (1864-68). During that period he equipped a travelling workshop and introduced steam road haulage, receiving a government grant of £500 for his services. Crompton retired from the army in 1875 and bought a partnership in a Chelmsford engineering firm. In 1878, while adviser at the Stanton ironworks belonging to the Derbyshire branch of his family, he introduced the new Gramme dynamos to improve the foundry lighting - with great success. From then on, his main interest was in the development of electrical systems and he reached the highest levels of achievement and of recognition in his profession (twice President of the IEC; IEC Faraday Medalist 1926; F.R.S. 1933). '*Crompton-derived*' companies are active to this day.<sup>3</sup> Between 1890 and 1899, Crompton revisited India, advising the government on electrical projects. He commanded the RE Corps of Electrical Engineers Volunteers during the Boer War and by May 1900 was in South Africa with his men, whose efficiency in maintaining communications and skill in emergencies won high praise. Crompton went out as a Captain and, on his return later that year, he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, appointed CB, and retained as a consultant to the War Office on the development of mechanical transport. His talents extended to road building (from 1910). Early in WW1, Churchill consulted him on the design of an armoured vehicle capable of crossing trenches. Crompton was responsible for producing a type of '*landship*' which was developed by others into the tank. [ See my ADDENDUM for a related "Crompton + medal" event. ]

At the age of 83, in 1928, Crompton published his "*Reminiscences*" (Constable & Co. Ltd., London), which included his claims (on pp 6-15) that he was in the Crimea during actual hostilities and that he was '*awarded*' the British Crimea Medal. If true, he might well have been the last British survivor of the campaign. Many interesting details in his account have the smack of reality. However, the gross inconsistencies also present lead us to the firm conclusion that although he may have '*acquired*' a medal there (or thereafter), he cannot have been entitled to it. Our investigations show that Crompton - from his own words - could not possibly have travelled to the Crimea until well AFTER the qualifying period. Here, we present extracts from his autobiography, with our interpolated notes labeled '[A]', etc.

*"Our Christmas doings of the year 1854 - the last of these Sion Hill entertainments - are connected in my memory with the excitement of war, and my childish eagerness to go with my eldest brother to the front. That I should actually have had my wish nobody could have dreamed at the time, for I was only nine years old. The Crimean War had recently broken out, and a feature of our Christmas tableaux was a caricature presentation of the Tsar of Russia, while my brother<sup>4</sup>, who had recently joined the 42nd Highlanders<sup>5</sup>, figured in his new uniform as 'our gallant army'".*

*"My father had been for many years an officer in the 2nd West Yorkshire Light Infantry Militia<sup>6</sup>, and when the regiment was embodied for war service he joined up and volunteered to take the battalion out to the front. Eventually he with the regiment was ordered to Gibraltar to relieve other line regiments. My father took his family - my mother, my sister Helen and myself - to Gibraltar with him, where we, and I in particular, had a most interesting time. I was enthusiastic about soldiering, and remember helping my father to prepare his cards for battalion drill and for brigade manoeuvres. The Gibraltar garrison then consisted of six regiments, three of them regular line regiments - the 54th, 66th and 94th, and three militia regiments, the 3rd Lancashire under Colonel*

*Wilson Patten, the Northamptonshire under Lord Burleigh, and the 2nd West Yorkshire under my father..."*

*"During our stay at Gibraltar I was taken with other members of my family on excursions into Spain, and the distances we covered on horseback now appear to me very astonishing. My father had taken out one or two English horses, but I rode a black Barb, a very handsome beast. I remember meeting and riding with Commander Maxse<sup>7</sup> of H.M.S. Ariel<sup>8</sup> who was celebrated for the ride he made after the battle of the Alma, conveying despatches to the Commander-in-Chief..."*

**[A] HMS 'Ariel' was in the Baltic Fleet until December, 1855. The later reports in 'The Times' place her at Gibraltar intermittently in the period from March to July, 1856.**

*"Whether it was that my parents' resistance was worn out by my importunity, or that they thought that I was being spoilt and made too much of by their many friends and should be the better for some discipline, the fact is that when my mother's cousin, Captain Houston Stewart<sup>9</sup> who commanded H.M.S. Dragon<sup>10</sup>, passed through Gibraltar, they allowed him to take me with him on board his ship to the Crimea. [B] HMS 'Dragon' could not have been in the Mediterranean before 1856. I started as my cousin's guest on the Dragon, but eventually it was found to be necessary that I should be enrolled as a cadet in the Royal Navy. Thus I may be said to have commenced my service to Queen Victoria at the age of rather less than eleven. I donned cadet's uniform, and was sent to study hard under the naval instructor in the Dragon. ..."* [C] Born in 1845, this would date Crompton's trip before mid-May, 1856 - not 1855. Normally, a Naval Cadet had to be at least 12 and had to pass an exam/interview, usually aboard HMS 'Victory' at Portsmouth. [Admiralty Regulation of 1st April, 1849: "Qualifications for Naval Cadets. Naval cadets must not be under 12 or over 14 years of age..."]

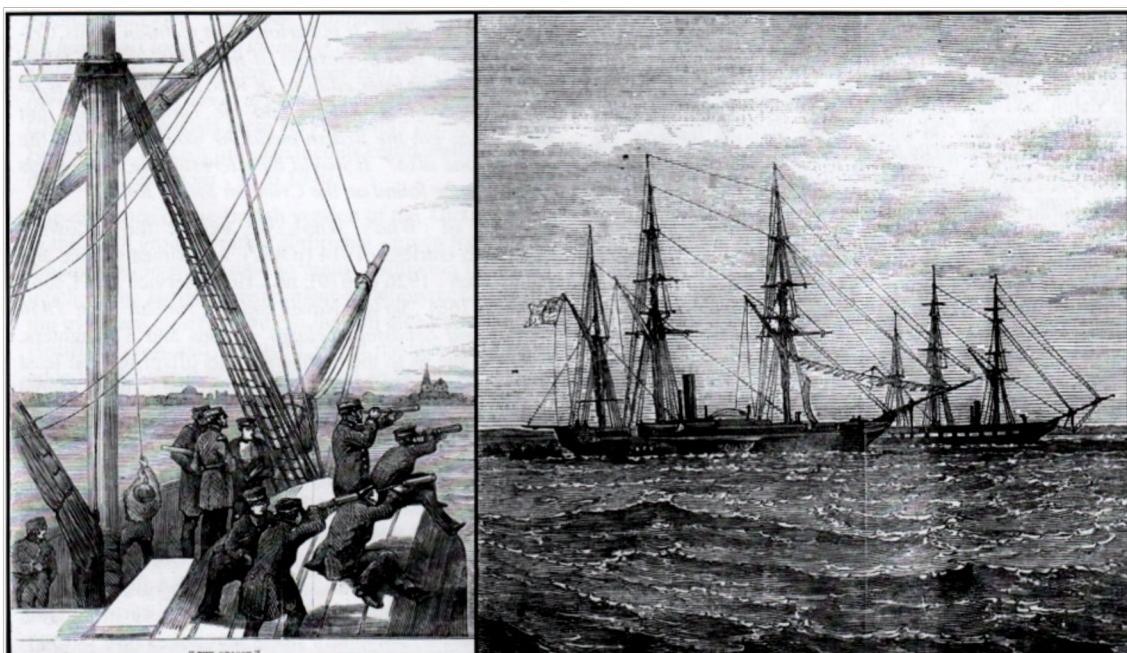


Fig. 1: 'Illustrated London News'; 7 July, 1855:  
**'CRONSTADT FROM THE SOUTH-WEST':  
'THE DRAGON'**

Fig 2 : 'Illustrated London News'; 21 July, 1855:  
**'THE BALTIC FLEET OFF TOLBOUKIN BEACON - CRONSTADT AND THE RUSSIAN FLEET WITHIN VIEW':  
'DRAGON, CAPT. STEWART:  
EURYALUS, 91, CAPT. RAMSAY'**

*"We were delayed some days at Malta in helping to tow off the troopship Perseverance<sup>11</sup> from a reef or rock on which she had stuck fast in the inner harbour of Citta Vecchia<sup>12</sup>. The largest rope cables I ever saw were used to attach the Dragon to the Perseverance. The Dragon suddenly went*

*ahead, the huge cables rose out of the water with a loud singing sound and then snapped. The fractured ends came in board, did much damage, broke several men's legs and narrowly missed me. In fact, I only escaped by jumping clear into the mizzen rigging. ...” [D] In fact, the attempted refloating of ‘Perseverance’ took place on 23rd July 1856 during HMS ‘Dragon’s return FROM Balaklava.*

“We stayed some days at Constantinople, and I with my messmates visited the Valley of Sweet Waters, then one of the sights of Pera, the European quarter. The Dragon was ordered to tow a large sailing ship laden with military stores across the Black Sea to Balaclava.<sup>13</sup> But when we got clear of the Bosphorus it began to blow hard, and we had two days and nights of storm bad even for the Black Sea. We had to cast adrift the ship we were towing, so that she went ashore and was lost on the rocks. Even we on the Dragon had a terrible time. The oldest hands were seasick, and, when we did get across, we could not make Balaclava harbour, but had to turn westwards and round the Chersonese point. Eventually we came to harbour in Kasatch Bay, the next bay to Kamiesch, the disembarkation point of the French. We found at Kasatch part of the English fleet, including the flagship, H.M.S. Hannibal, the Admiral in Command being Sir Houston Stewart<sup>14</sup>, my Captain's father and my relative...” [E] Sir Edmund Lyons became the Admiral in Command after the departure of Sir James Dundas on 20 December, 1854. Houston Stewart was a junior Admiral in 'Hannibal' in the Black Sea from January 1855.

*“As soon as I was able to get leave after our arrival at Kasatch, I went to visit my brother, who was in the trenches before Sebastopol. This was shortly before the great assaults were made on the Malakoff Tower by the French and by the English on the Redan. Thus it was that I was able to make first-hand acquaintance with all the details of trench warfare as it was waged sixty years before the Great War. I remember, for instance, the Lancaster rifle-guns, which were the first rifled cannon actually used in warfare. Their shells made a peculiar noise, on account of which our men called them 'Whistling Dicks'<sup>15</sup> At night 'No Man's Land,' as it was called in the late war, the ground which lay between our trenches and the front of the Redan, was often lighted up by large shells thrown up from mortars either by ourselves or by the Russians. These flare-shells, which went by the name of 'Carcasses,' were pierced with holes, from which, as the shells rose in the air slowly revolving, curved jets of flame issued and gave the desired lighting effect.”*

[F] Crompton definitely asserts that he was in the Crimea before one or other of the two assaults on the Malakoff and the Redan - June 18 and September 8, 1855. Given our evidence, this is impossible.

*“When, during the armistice after the great assault on the Redan, I went over the ground in front of our trenches, I found that what had appeared to be a bluish sort of gravel really consisted of the remains of countless lead bullets fired either from our own or from the Russian rifles and muskets. As at this time the transition from smooth bore to rifled firearms was taking place, I was able to pick up an interesting variety of bullets. The French had developed the idea of expanding the base of conical bullets, so that they might take the rifling, by driving the bullet down on a central pillar in the breach, whence these French rifles were called 'Carabines a tige.' We English were already using the Minie type of rifle bullet, which had an expanding hollow base; but the point of these Minie bullets often broke away, so that the part which I found on the ground was a lead cylinder open at both ends.” [G] There was no prolonged armistice after either assault on the Redan in 1855 (when Crompton could not have been present). He was in the Crimea after February 29, 1856, when the genuine armistice was signed.*

*“I have a clear recollection of the construction of the larger trenches or parallels, as we called them, as well as of the zig-zag and approach trenches which connected the parallels. The sides of all these trenches were revetted with gabions - large cylinders of basket-work filled with earth. The courses of gabions were alternated with layers of fascines, which are long faggots made of brushwood. I was much interested in this trench construction, which went on right up to the time of*

*the attacks on the Malakoff Redoubt and the Redan.” [H] Crompton saw the trench system, but could not have witnessed its building.*

*“After the capture of the Malakoff and the Redan, the Russians were fairly beaten. They began to retire from their lines on the south side of Sebastopol, and every night their troops were to be seen moving over a bridge of boats which connected the south with the north side of the harbour. But the Allies continued for some time their attacks on the large semicircle of fortifications which protected the town on the south.<sup>16</sup> Behind the Malakoff and Redan, which formed part of these lines, lay the Karabelnaya suburb. The ground here fell away towards the town, and this slope was absolutely covered with cannon balls, fragments of shell and bullets by the ton, and was the great hunting-ground for us who were collecting souvenirs.” [I] Crompton could not have seen the floating bridge *in situ* or in use.*

*“Soon after the armistice, peace was made, and, as my brother on sailing for England with his regiment had made me a parting present of his two Tartar ponies, I was able to mount one or other of my messmates and ride with them to various points of interest in the Crimea. The ponies I afterwards identified with the Yarkandi Tattoos, which are often seen in Northern India, and are valued for their marvellous powers of endurance. We naval cadets were light weights, so that our ponies were able to carry us as much as eighty miles in the day; and I remember that we rode up the Tchernaya Valley as far as Bactschiserai, the ancient Tartar capital of the Crimea, and to the Traktir Dagh, which is the highest point of the peninsula. We also visited the Tsar's summer palace, Orianda, which is close to Yalta. We thought the grounds very beautiful and well laid-out. Through them ran small trout streams, which reminded me pleasantly of Yorkshire. My cousin, who afterwards became Sir John Alexander<sup>17</sup>, and in the Japanese war [1863-64] commanded the English fleet at Yokohama, was my companion on several of these rides.” [J] His brother's regiment left for England ca. 14 June, 1856. Crompton's pony rides must have taken place thereafter.*

*“H.M.S. Dragon remained some time anchored in Sebastopol harbour, waiting to bring home the party of Royal Engineers left behind to blow up and dismantle the docks. I watched them with great interest as they destroyed the very beautiful graving and other docks by exploding charges behind the walls, reducing the whole to a mass of ruins. The destruction seemed to me at the time an unnecessary and barbarous procedure.” [K] Crompton could not have witnessed the destruction of the docks by French and British engineers (often under fire) between September 18, 1855, and February 1, 1856.*

*“By the autumn of 1856 I was back at Sion Hill. I was then only eleven years old but the life I had led from the time we sailed for Gibraltar up to my return to England had been full of new experience, and I was older than my years. [L] Crompton unmistakably dates his Crimean trip to 1856. My life on board ship was certainly of great advantage to me. I was the whole time under naval instruction, working alongside cadets two years older than myself...”*

*“I was a precocious boy, and already keenly and intelligently interested in anything to do with mechanics.” “Captain Robb of the Caesar<sup>18</sup> was expecting a visit of inspection from the Admiral, and was conscious of being rather 'shaky' on the subject of his engines. He got me to prime him on matters of horse-power, steaming capacity and the like, and was able to answer the Admiral's inquiries correctly....” [M] HMS ‘Caesar’ did carry troops to the Crimea (early in 1855) and back from the Crimea (midsummer, 1856). Otherwise, she was on the Baltic station.*

*"It seems a little farcical that a child of eleven, who had only been a visitor in the trenches, should have received a military distinction, but, as I had actually been in the firing line, I was awarded the Crimean medal and Sebastopol clasp."* [N] More than farcical, we consider that this statement is demonstrably untrue. He was never in the firing line and was not entitled to any award of the British Crimean Medal, with or without clasp.

*"Very soon after my return to England I left the navy, and towards the end of 1856 was sent to school at Elstree to prepare for Harrow. At Elstree I at once became the authority on naval matters. My Crimean experience gave me a certain prestige, and this helped me to settle down - no easy matter for me, since, having been so long working with men, I looked upon my new schoolfellows, most of whom were really older and stronger than I was, as mere children, and treated them accordingly. This, however, was soon knocked out of me."*

From Crompton's account, there seems no doubt that he did travel to and from the Crimea on HMS 'Dragon'. However, that ship's movements during 1854-56 - as recorded in '*The Times*' - make it perfectly clear that he could NOT have been present during the qualifying period for an official Crimea Medal award. [O] (The 'cutoff date' for the Navy was 11 Sept, 1855.) HMS 'Dragon' was in the Baltic Fleets of both 1854 and 1855 and is rightly in the list of ships with crews entitled to the Baltic Medal.<sup>19</sup> Fig. 1 (complete with a group of young Naval Cadets or Midshipmen in uniform) and Fig. 2 show her off Cronstadt in July, 1855. HMS 'Dragon' is not in the list for the Crimean Medal as she only made one trip to the Crimea and that in the summer of 1856. For reference, the Paris Peace Conference opened on February 25, 1856. The Armistice and the Treaty of Paris were signed on February 29 and March 30, respectively. On April 27, the ratification of the Treaty of Paris in London formally ended Britain's participation in the war.

Exhaustive searches of ALL of the Crimean and (for good measure) the Baltic Medal Rolls have failed to show Crompton as a recorded official recipient of any medal.<sup>20</sup> We suggest that Crompton's father knew that the family were about to return home and that he and Captain Houston Stewart decided to give the 11-year old boy an exciting trip to the Crimea to see his brother after the war had ended. It was perhaps intended that HMS 'Dragon' would return to Gibraltar before the militia left for home. She was delayed in passage from the Crimea and young Crompton had to return to England in her. While we do not doubt that (in 1856) he visited what had been the firing-line, he can never have been in the line of fire. Even if he had been formally enrolled as a Naval Cadet, simply landing in the Crimea after the 'cut-off date' would not have entitled him to a Medal.

Two relevant articles have appeared in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. That by Patrick Cadell (1955)<sup>21</sup> does no more than repeat Crompton's story but that by 'H. F. J.-T.'(unidentified) (1956)<sup>22</sup> strongly disputes Crompton's claims and states "*There is some controversy over Colonel R. E. B. Crompton's award of the Crimean Medal, and in fact it seems highly improbable that he did receive it with the Sebastopol clasp. During and after the Crimean War the Government were adamant in refusing the medal to those who visited the front and were not on the roll of a unit of the Expeditionary Force. Sir William Howard Russell states in his letters that even the crew of H.M.S. Diamond were refused the medal, although they worked on shore from the commencement of the siege for many months. Some bluejackets from this ship, which were transferred, got the medal, but none of those who were working on shore at Balaklava. I know of no award of the medal to those who were not on the roll of the Expeditionary Force except Mrs. Seacole, whose wonderful work at Balaklava with the sick and wounded was given in 'The Times' of 24th December, 1854. [Correction: May 16th 1856] Dr. Douglas Reid, who served in the 90th Light Infantry in the Crimea, also extolled the work of Mrs. Seacole, who was granted the Crimean Medal without clasp, after much trouble.<sup>23</sup> But she was, as far as I know, the only one who got the medal who was not there by order of the Government.*

*Lieut.-Colonel Crompton wrote his biography. I got a copy and took it out to the late Viscount Dillon, C.H.<sup>24</sup>, and asked him about the grant of the medal. He had served with Colonel Crompton in the Rifle Brigade in India for some years, and he said that he now maintained that he was awarded the medal, and he had worn the ribbon or ribbons. He never got the Turkish Medal, and if the Government had given him the Crimean Medal he would have got the Turkish Medal also. He told me that later in his life he thought that he was entitled to the medal, and even in his description in "Who's Who" he did not state this until some time after the period, when the medals were handed out to anyone, even for a joy-ride. There were many officers who served in the Crimean campaign, and they were all of the opinion that no one could get the medal unless he was on the roll of some unit of the force. The award to Mrs. Seacole was the reward for very good and efficient voluntary service to the troops for many cold and wearisome months. She wore the medal afterwards, and was very proud of it. All the officers who joined after the fall of Sebastopol, even if they got the medal, had to return it, and there was much grumbling when they returned the medals... Colonel Crompton did, of course, go up to see his brother in the 42nd, but that did not make him entitled to the medal or the clasp for "Sebastopol."*"

Two later articles appeared in the *Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society*. Thus, A. F. Flatow and J. M. A. Tamplin (1974)<sup>25</sup> repeated Crompton's story and added: - "His C.B. and Q.S.A. were sold at Christie's on 17 November 1970, lot 2, together with three miniatures (C.B., Crimea and Q.S.A.)." Further, O. P. M. Conway (1975)<sup>26</sup> wrote: - "Proof of entitlement may have been found recently, but at one time there seems to have been considerable doubt about Colonel R. E. B. Crompton's award of the Crimean Medal. A note appeared in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* in September 1956 (Vol. XXXIV, p. 132) over the initials 'H.F.J.-T.' showing that it was highly improbable that he did receive it, although later in life he believed he was entitled because he had visited the Crimea. It may be significant that the group sold in 1970 included a miniature 'Crimea' but not a full size original one. One wonders if a photograph exists of Colonel Crompton wearing the original medal. It is curious that mention of his Crimean service and possession of the medal is only found in his entries in later editions of *Who's Who*. There is no mention anywhere that he had the Turkish medal, but surely if he got the British medal he would have had the Turkish one also? It would be interesting to know if his name is to be found on the Crimean Medal Rolls."

Apropos of '*Who's Who*', we extract the following Crompton entries: - 1914 (p 487); no Crimea service and no children : 1926 (p 679); no Crimea service and 1 son : 1935 (p 768) 'Served Naval cadet, Crimean War, 1856 (medal and Sebastopol clasp)' 2 sons and 3 daughters. While vague as to the numbers of his offspring<sup>27</sup>, at least in 1935 Crompton definitely claimed the Crimea Medal and clasp, but dated his 'service' in 1856 - when no-one was entitled to them.

As regards actual medals, we note that Crompton's C.B. and Q.S.A. were sold at Christie's on 17 November 1970 (lot 2) together with three miniatures (C.B., Crimea and Q.S.A.). Our information is that the QSA, but not the CB, was always named. The CB and QSA full-size medals were very probably genuine. The corresponding miniatures may also have been genuine. From our evidence, the British Crimea miniature may have been a deliberate 'addition' to enhance auction values.

In Sotheby's Medal Auction on 15 November 1978, the following group was presented: - "ROYAL ENGINEERS: Four. Major R. E. B. Crompton. C.B. (Military Division), gold (H.M. 1882) and enamel breast badge, with gold riband buckle; Crimea (unnamed), one clasp (Sebastopol) loose on riband; Q.S.A., three clasps (Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal); Turkish Crimea, (British issue). Good very fine and better."<sup>28</sup> Again, the CB and QSA medals were very probably genuine, but the British and Turkish full-size medals could well have been deliberate 'additions', as in 1970.

The existence of the British version of the Turkish Medal in the 1978 group is rather surprising - given that the Sardinian version was issued to many, following the loss of much of the British consignment by shipwreck. Overall, the evidence clearly points to the full size and un-named British Crimea and Turkish Crimea medals having been added at a later date. There seems to be no need to assume that those auction medals came from Crompton's brother (who had his own family) and we are not aware whether his brother's medals exist in any 'authentic' form. Over the years, '*The Times*' published several statements that Crompton was a holder of the Crimean Medal, but his obituary (16 Feb, 1940) stated "*As a boy he went to Gibraltar in 1855 with his father, who took out the Second West Yorkshire Militia, and in the following year he was in the Crimea as a Naval Cadet in HMS Dragon Fly (sic).*" **This asserts (in error) that he was a Naval Cadet, dates his Crimea trip to 1856 and does not mention any Crimea Medal.**

From the reports in '*The Times*', we estimate that HMS '*Dragon*' left Plymouth for the Crimea on 11 May, returned to Malta from Balaclava on 19 July, left Malta on 23 July and arrived back at Spithead on 5 August, 1856. Accordingly, Crompton's time in the Crimea spanned the period from mid-May to mid-July that year.



*Fig 3 : 'Vanity Fair', 30th August 1911  
Rookes Evelyn Bell Crompton:  
'The Road Builder': Military Engineer. Served in India. South Africa.*

We are totally unable to account for Crompton's startling assertions about his Crimean experiences and much of his account appears to be based on somewhat garbled hear-say - or later reading. The search for the last survivor will continue. While we have shown that Crompton's claim to the British Crimean Medal is wholly unfounded, it is only fitting to conclude by presenting an image of this remarkable and talented man. He is shown wearing the ribbons of his well-earned CB and QSA medals - to which he was fully entitled.

#### [ ADDENDUM : A related "Crompton + medal" event. ]

John Glanfield's excellent book "*The Devil's Chariots: The Birth and Secret Battles of the First Tanks*" (Sutton Publishing, 2001) shows that Crompton did influence the development of the tank for battle - but only to a limited extent. On p83, I was startled to read "...Hetherington and Stern accompanied Crompton on a visit to the front on 21 April [1915], intent on seeing captured German trenches at Neuve-Chapelle. Crompton put up his Crimea medal for the occasion....they were back in London thirty-six hours after setting out..." So - Crompton really HAD persuaded himself that he

was entitled to the British Crimea Medal. He maintained that claim for all of his very long life (1845-1940). He was WRONG!

One British officer, Walter James Hore Ruthven (1838-1921) served in the Rifle Brigade in the Crimea and was awarded the medal. In the Great War, he served with the RB depot at Winchester & in 1915 became a King's Messenger. Travelling frequently to France, he managed to make it up to the trenches on one occasion and displayed his medal ribbon. His obituary in '*The Times*' for 1st March 1921 includes:- "*The death of his wife sharply broke the even tenor of his days. He plunged again into the world from which a quarter of a century before he had virtually retired. The war broke out. Though 76 years of age, he offered his services to the War Office, and insisted on returning to his old regiment, the Rifle Brigade, with which he did duty at the depot at Winchester. In 1915 he became a King's Messenger and made countless trips across Channel in the course of his duties, both by aeroplane and boat. On one of his later visits to France, Ruthven made his way up to the front-line trenches, and while G.H.Q. were telegraphing all over Northern France, "Where is Lord Ruthven?" he was sitting, through the whole of one night, in a sap in the hope, as he expressed it, of "potting a German" at dawn. The incident was characteristic of the man. He wore the ribbons of the Crimea and of the European War side by side on his uniform and he had earned both in active service.*"

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#### Endnotes:-

- <sup>1</sup> (a). W. L. Randell, 'Crompton, Rookes Evelyn Bell (1845-1940)', rev. Anita McConnell, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004;
- (b). <http://rsbm.royalsocietypublishing.org/> (Search 'Crompton');
- (c). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R.\\_E.\\_B.\\_Cr0mpt0n](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R._E._B._Cr0mpt0n);
- (d) [http://www.iec.ch/about/history/articles/colonel\\_crompton.htm](http://www.iec.ch/about/history/articles/colonel_crompton.htm) [N.B. Most sources simply repeat Crompton's claim to the British Crimean Medal].

- <sup>2</sup> Crompton's service is shown in 'Hart's List for 1867' (p 395) as 'The Prince Consort's Rifle Brigade: 3 year's Full Pay: Ensign (by purchase) 26 Apr 1864'. There is no mention of any Crimean service or award, nor are any shown in his entries in the Hart's Lists for 1870, 1878, 1885 and 1915.

- <sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.crompton-instruments.com/>; <http://www.cromptoncontrols.co.uk/>; <http://www.ctgltd.co.uk/>; <http://www.cromptonlighting.com/>.

- <sup>4</sup> William Henry Crompton (1834-1888):- 'Hart's List for 1855' (p 125): 42nd (The Royal Highland) Regt. of Foot; (1 Year Full Pay); Ensign (by purchase) 17 Aug 1854; Lieutenant 9 Feb 1855: 'Hart's List for 1856' (p 225): "42nd (The Royal Highland) Regt. of Foot; Lieuts. Black, Crompton (2 Years Full Pay), Ferguson, Baird, Green, Farquharson, Hon. R. H. Stewart, Hesketh (received a contusion from a round shot in the trenches), and Bramley served at the siege and fall of Sebastopol from July 1855 (Medal and Clasp)." His obituary ('*The Times*', 13 September, 1888) stated "He entered the Army at an early age, and served successively in the 42nd Highlanders and the 11th Regiment of Foot. In the former regiment he saw active service in the Crimea, including the siege and fall of Sebastopol, for which he had received the usual medal and clasp, and also the Turkish Medal, besides being mentioned in the despatches of the General in command. In 1882 he was made, on retiring from the Army, an honorary Major-General. He married, in 1858, Miss Frances Elizabeth Dalton, fifth daughter of the late Mr. John Dalton, of

Slenningford Park, Yorkshire, and of Fillingham Castle, Lincolnshire, by whom he has left a family." Their three daughters were Mary, Elizabeth, and Consuelo Crompton-Stansfield.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Medical and Surgical History, the 42nd left Portsmouth on 20 May 1854, arrived at Malta on June 1 and Scutari on 7 June, disembarking on the 9th. They re-embarked on 13 June, arriving at Varna on the 15th. The Regimental Hospital in the Crimea closed on 14 June 1856 and the men embarked for England. (*Mike Hinton*)

<sup>6</sup> 2nd West Yorkshire Light Infantry Militia became the 3rd Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire and bore on its regimental colour a scroll inscribed MEDITERRANEAN, in commemoration of its having served on that station during the Crimean War. The headquarters were at York. (See [http://www.lightinfantry.org.uk/regiments/county/county\\_2.htm](http://www.lightinfantry.org.uk/regiments/county/county_2.htm)).

*'The Times'* 1855:-

**May 21** - 'The new clipper ship Tudor, 1,573 tons, has been taken up at Liverpool as a transport and will embark the 2nd West Yorkshire Militia Regiment at that port, on the 30th inst., for Gibraltar.'

**Jun 02** - 'The 2nd West Yorkshire Militia, who are to embark at Liverpool in the sailing clipper Tudor, arrived at that town yester day, together with two field officers, six captains, five ladies, 87 children, and 50 soldiers' wives. The Tudor is expected to sail today for Gibraltar.' [**The 2nd West Yorkshire Militia returned to England in June 1856.**]

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Augustus Maxse (1833-1900) had a distinguished naval career.: 2 February 1854 Lieutenant in Agamemnon, commanded by Thomas Matthew Charles Symonds, flagship of Rear-Admiral Edmund Lyons, second in command, Black Sea during the Russian War (Maxse was also Naval aide-de-camp to Lord Raglan after the battle of the Alma). He retired as Admiral in 1867 and became much interested in social, political and literary matters.

<sup>8</sup> HMS 'Ariel' : ( 'Swallow ' class wooden Screw Sloop ); launched 11 July, 1854; 625 tons displacement; 9 guns. : 27 January 1855 - 5 December 1855 - Commanded (from commissioning at Portsmouth) by Commander John Proctor Luce, White Sea, during the Russian War.

*'The Times'* : 1855:-

Nov 19 — 'After repairs following Baltic service, HMS Ariel was towed into Plymouth Sound. ' 5 December 1855 - 25 November 1857 - 'Commanded by Commander Frederick Augustus Maxse, Mediterranean. '

*'The Times'* : 1856:-

Mar 24 - 'HMS Ariel at Gibraltar on 18th March. '

Apr 22 - 'HMS Ariel sailed from Southampton for Malta on 10th April. '

May 12 - 'HMS Ariel arrived at Malta on 24th April and left for Gibraltar on 30th April. '

May 24 - 'HMS Ariel at Gibraltar on 16th May. '

Jun 07 - 'HMS Ariel left Gibraltar on 28th May for a cruise to the eastward. '

Jul 05 - 'HMS Ariel returned to Gibraltar on 20th June from a cruise to the Riff coast. '

Jul 24 - 'HMS Ariel at Gibraltar on 13th July. '

[ Outline history : see <http://www.pdavis.nl>ShowShip.php?id=142> ].

<sup>9</sup> William Houston Stewart (1822-1901) entered the Navy on 29 April 1835: On 9 July 1854, Stewart was promoted to captain. He was then appointed captain of the 4-gun 2nd-class paddle-frigate HMS *Firebrand*, replacing Captain Hyde Parker. During this time HMS *Firebrand* was serving in the Black Sea during the Crimean War. On 29 August, Stewart was superseded by Captain William Moorsom. On 2 February 1855, he was appointed captain of the 6-gun 2nd-class paddle-frigate HMS Dragon; his predecessor, Captain James Willcox, had only commanded her for 11 days. Under Stewart, Dragon served in the Baltic Fleet in the second year of the Crimean War.

<sup>10</sup> HMS 'Dragon' :-

*'The Times'* : 1855:-

Sep 05 - Caesar and Dragon both listed on Baltic station.

Oct 20 - 'HMS Dragon off Revel on Oct 16.'

Dec 05 - 'Dragon at Kiel on 2nd Dec.'

Dec 29 - 'Dragon and Centaur arrived at Spithead from the Baltic on 25th Dec.'

*'The Times'* : 1856:-

Feb 07 'Dragon undocked at Portsmouth after refit.'

Feb 25 - 'Dragon left Spithead on 23rd Feb to follow the advanced squadron.'

Mar 10 - 'Dragon arrived at Spithead from the Eastward on Saturday night 8th March.

Perseverance troopship preparing for sea.'

Apr 28 - 'Dragon and Centaur left Portsmouth on 26th April for the eastward with the Thunder, 14, floating battery.'

May 01 - 'Malta letter 24th April : Dragon, 6, Commander Stewart, has left for the Eastward.'

May 13 - 'Malta letter 5th May: Paddle-wheel steam frigate 'Dragon', 6, Captain W. H. Stewart, to leave Plymouth yesterday for the Crimea to bring home troops.'

May 14 - 'Malta letter 7th May : Dragon, Captain W. H. Stewart, left Plymouth on Sunday 11th May, for the Crimea, to bring home troops.'

Jul 29 - 'Malta letter 23rd July : Dragon arrived from Balaklava on the 19th, bringing Major Robertson RE, Major Cooke RE, one Lieutenant 4th Regiment, three assistant staff-surgeons and 229 non-commissioned officers and men of the Sappers and Miners.'

Jul 30 - 'Malta letter 25th July: Dragon left for England on the 23rd'

Aug 06 - 'Dragon, 6, Captain Stevens [Stewart], arrived at Spithead last night from Balaklava, Malta and Gibraltar.' Details of officers brought back.

Aug 12 - 'Dragon, Captain Stewart CB, left Portsmouth yesterday and anchored at Spithead.'

[ Outline history : see <http://www.pdavis.nl>ShowShip.php?id=1358> ]

<sup>11</sup> Transport 'Perseverance' : [ Ex-Russian 'Sobraon', purchased on stocks. :

Full history : see <http://www.pdavis.nl>ShowShip.php?id=1869> ]

9 June 1855-21 November 1855. Manned and operated by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company as a troopship, commanded by Captain Henry Harris.

23 November 1854-6 February 1855 - Commanded by Commander William John Samuel Pullen, Woolwich.

28 November 1855-26 February 1856 - Commanded (from commissioning at Portsmouth) by Commander John Hay Crang, particular service (until superseded for getting the vessel aground on Portland Bill).

27 February 1856- 30 September 1857- Commanded by Commander John Wallace Douglas McDonald, particular service.

*'The Times'* : 1854:

Nov 21 — 'The Perseverance screw steamship, is to be taken down to Woolwich today to be made ready for sea.'

*'The Times'* : 1855:-

Jan 27 - 'House of Lords, Jan. 26. 'Perseverance turned on her beam-ends in Woolwich dock.'

Jun 06 - 'Perseverance to receive mess kits at Sheerness as the troops are daily expected for embarkation.'

Jun 09 - 'The Perseverance screw steam storeship, Captain Henry Harris, is ordered to proceed on a trial trip of her machinery on Monday next, preparatory to her being delivered over to the Oriental Steampacket Company. She is now receiving her stores at Sheerness, having taken in her complement of coals. She is to be put out of the fitting-basin this day's tide.'

Jun 18 - 'P&O Company transport Perseverance to take on artillery men and guns today.'

Sep 10 - 'The steamship Perseverance, with the 94th. Regiment, was off Plymouth at 5 o'clock on Friday morning, bound to the Mediterranean.'

Oct 29 - 'Perseverance, No. 7, to embark 4th Middlesex Militia at Portsmouth today.'

Nov 23 - 'The Perseverance, steam transport No. 7, Captain Haines [Harris], was ordered yesterday to be turned over by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (who have been working her since her outfit) to the Admiralty, as she will henceforth be a naval transport, commanded by Commander Crang and a man-of-war crew and complement of officers.'

*'The Times'* : 1856:-

5 Mar - 'The Perseverance steam troopship, Commander R.J.J. M'Donnald, was taken in to be examined, after being ashore off Portland lately, (for which Commander Crang and Mr. Green, the master, were lately tried by court-martial and severely reprimanded - a punishment deemed so light by the Lords of the Admiralty that they have summarily superseded them since).

May 17- 'Perseverance at Portsmouth on 16th May.'

Jun 02 - 'Perseverance arrived at Malta from Plymouth on 27th May.'

Jun 21 - 'Perseverance arrived at Malta from Constantinople on 29th of May, and left on the 30th.'

Jul 29 - The following military, and naval news is derived from letters of our Malta correspondent to the 23d inst.: - "The steam- transport Perseverance on leaving her moorings, at Coradino, on the morning of the 21st of July, to take her departure for England, with 410 invalids from the East, ran on Isola Point, where, notwithstanding the united power of the Dragon, Magicienne, Shearwater, and Argo steamers to extricate her, she continued hard and fast on the departure of the mail at noon, on the 23d; and, although the rock is said to be very even, it is much feared that she will have suffered serious damage. All the troops, stores, fuel, ballast, &c., have been landed, but, as yet, without moving her in the least."

Jul 30 - 'Malta mail 23rd July: 'Perseverance refloated during afternoon of 23rd. Dragon left for England on the 23rd.'

Aug 19 - Perseverance taken into dock at Portsmouth on 18th August.'

<sup>12</sup> An error for 'Valetta'. Mdina is a town in west-central Malta, some 6 miles west of Valletta. It was also named Notabile in the 15th century by the Castilian rulers who made it the Maltese capital until the mid-16th century, when Valletta, the new capital, was nearly completed; thereafter it received the appellation of Città Vecchia ("Old City").

<sup>13</sup> To date, we have found no record of HMS '*Dragon*' towing a transport to Balaclava.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Houston Stewart (1791-1875). During the Crimean War, Stewart was second in command of the British fleet in the Black Sea under Sir Edmund Lyons and was in command at the capture of Kinburn. His flag was in HMS '*Hannibal*'.

<sup>15</sup> The Lancaster guns were oval-bored with a gaining spiral (which was the main reason they blew their muzzles off). Shells were largely abandoned for common round shot. [Bill Curtis]. The Lancaster projectiles did make a peculiar noise but '*Whistling Dicks*' were Russian - not British - projectiles.

<sup>16</sup> An error for 'north'? Allied attacks on the south of the city ended after 8 September, 1855 - when Crompton was not present.

<sup>17</sup> John Hobhouse Inglis Alexander R.N. (1832-1875); Lieutenant in HMS 'Furious' from 11 Jan, 1854 - 3 Nov, 1855; Lieutenant in HMS 'Hannibal' from 4 Nov, 1855 -20 Nov, 1856.

<sup>18</sup> HMS 'Caesar': [ see <http://www.pdavis.nl>ShowShip.php?id=15> ]

'*The Times*' : 1854:-

Mar 04 - 'Caesar', 90, new screw ship, Captain Robb, has been got out of harbour at Portsmouth 3rd March.'

Mar 13 - 'Caesar, 91, screw, Captain Robb...far from ready to join the fleet.'

Oct 31 'Baltic Fleet: Caesar at Kiel.'

Dec 02 - 'Baltic Fleet: Caesar to leave Kiel for England 28th November.'

Dec 18 'Caesar', 91, Captain Robb is daily expected at Cork, to embark detachments of the 9th and 14th for the Crimea direct.'

'*The Times*' : 1855:-

Feb 06 — 'Caesar' at Queenstown, Cork. Drafts of 13th and 93rd Regts. to embark for the Crimea.'

Apr 24 - 'Caesar, 91, at Kiel on 19th April.'

Sep 05 - 'Caesar and Dragon both listed on Baltic station.'

Nov 07 - 'Baltic Fleet: Caesar at Nargen. (Estonia).'

'*The Times*' : 1856:-

Apr 01 — 'Caesar, 91, at Kiel.'

May 29 - 'Caesar, 91, at Portsmouth...ordered to prepare for sea immediately.'

Jul 22 'Caesar disembarks 900 men of the 38th at Ports mouth.'

Oct 24 - 'Caesar at Plymouth'.

<sup>19</sup> W. L. Clowes, '*The Royal Navy*', Vol. VI, 413 (1901); William Clowes and Sons, London.

<sup>20</sup> ADM171/23-25 (Naval and Marine claimants who qualified for the "Crimea Medal" 1854-1855; ADM171/26-28 (Naval and Marine claimants who qualified for the "Crimea Medal" 1854-1855 (listed by Ships A-Z); ADM171/19-22 (Naval and Marine claimants who qualified for the "Baltic Medal" 1854-1855.

<sup>21</sup> Patrick Cadell, *JSAHR*, XXXIII No.135 (Autumn 1955), pp 138- 139. "Last Survivors of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny."

<sup>22</sup> 'H. F. J.-T.', *JSAHR*, XXXIV No.139 (Sept. 1956), pp 133-134. "The Crimean Medal".

<sup>23</sup> This award to Mary Seacole remains unconfirmed and is a matter of continuing controversy.

<sup>24</sup> Harold Arthur Lee-Dillon, 17th Viscount Dillon CH FBA (24 January 1844 - 18 December 1932) was an English antiquary and a leading authority on the history of arms and armour and medieval costume. Part of his army service is recorded in 'Hart's List for 1867', p 394: The Prince Consort's Rifle Brigade: 5 year's Full Pay : Ensign (by purchase) 8 Nov 1862; Lieutenant (by purchase) 16 Nov 1866. He served in India and Canada, but resigned his commission in 1874. He then joined the Oxfordshire Militia (later the 4th (Militia) Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry) as a Captain. He was promoted Major in 1885 and retired in 1891. He succeeded his father as 17th Viscount Dillon in 1892.

<sup>25</sup> A. F. Flatow and J. M. A. Tamplin, 'School Boys with Campaign Medals' JOMRS, p 176 (Winter 1974).

<sup>26</sup> O. P. M. Conway, ‘*Crompton Medal*’, JOMRS, p 42 (Spring 1975).

<sup>27</sup> Crompton certainly lived life to the full. In addition to five legitimate children (2s. 3d.) from his marriage to Miss Elizabeth Gertrude Clarke of Ripon, we note Ms. Nicky McSwain’s report (in 2000) “*My grandfather, Cyril Dell, and his brother Sydney, were both the illegitimate sons of Col. Rookes Evelyn Bell Crompton (1845-1940) of Thirsk, Yorkshire, England. My grandmother, Henrietta Dell, was Col. Crompton’s personal seamstress, and lived at the Crompton estate her entire adult life.*” [See: <http://boards.ancestry.myfamily.com/sumames.crompton/26/mb.ashx> ]

<sup>28</sup> A Medal Group image is available via <http://www.angloboerwar.com/contents.htm> (search that web-page for ‘CB Group to Crompton’).